UNIVERSITY SENATE

Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 14, 1976

PRESENT: Dr. J. O'Brien (Chairman) Mr. K. Adams; Prof. S.K. Misra; Dean A. Pinsky; Prof. G. Gross; Dean M. Despland; Prof. C.A. Davis; Mr. J. Princz; Prof. M. Cohen; Mr. M. Horgan; Prof. R.E. Wall; Mrs. J. Lowenstyn; Prof. T. Gray; Dean R. Breen; Dean J.C. Callaghan; Mr. G. Bushel Prof. P. Brunet; Prof. T.Y. Maag; Prof. A. Doyle; Prof. M. Osman; Prof. G.D. Xistris; Dean A. Audet; Prof. G. Adams; Prof. L. Bessner; Dean R. Verschingel; Dean I. Campbell; Dean A. Berczi; Prof. J. Bordan; Prof. J. Locke; Ms. R. Przestrzelski; Prof. M. Hogben; Mr. C. Ami

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Dr. D.J. McDougall; Mr. D. Chambers; Mr. J. Mathewson; Prof. S. McEvenue; Prof. J. Whitelaw; Prof. R. Zienius; Prof. P. Morley; Ms. V. Turini; Prof. D. Frosst

76-5-1 Dr. O'Brien explained that a new document on the Grading System has just been circulated for today's meeting (DOC-US-76-5-D1) and he suggested that Senators take a few minutes now to read the document before we begin to discuss it. 76-5-2 The meeting was called to order at 2:1O p.m.

Dr. O'Brien explained that this was a special meeting and consequently, we do not have the minutes from the last meeting to adopt, nor the usual first set of items on the agenda.

He advised also that the next Senate meeting will be on Friday, May 28, 1976 and it will be an all day meeting. The first portion of the meeting will deal with the Graduation Lists and we will then proceed with the normal business of the meeting.

He proposed that Senate keep open the possibility of a further meeting on Monday, May 31, 1976.

76-5-3 Dr. O'Brien explained that we will be dealing with the Supplementary Report on Grading System (DOC-US-76-5-D1) and also with the Transition Arrangements (DOC-US-76-5-D2) which has been distributed at the meeting.

Concerning the format of document number US-76-75-D1, Dr. O'Brien advised that what requires decision are those portions which are in italics. The remainder of the document is either commentary or points which have already been adopted by Senate.

Senate agreed to proceed item by item with document US-76-5-D1.

Mr. Adams pointed out that section 4 on page 2 of document US-76-5-D1 should all be in italics.

76-5-4 Mr. Adams suggested that Senate consider sections 1 and 2 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) together since both deal with Failing Grades. He pointed out that Senate has already adopted the "F" and the "FF" as the two failing designations.

He explained that what is here are the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee concerning the action to be taken on these grades with respect to supplemental examinations, if such examinations are available.

He also pointed out that "FNS" was the recommended grade designation to be used by professors for courses in which supplemental examinations are precluded.

It was pointed out that there are parts of Faculties which do not require supplemental examinations.

Dr. O'Brien explained that with respect to supplementals, what we have at the moment is the status quo which has been inherited and therefore "FNS" is to be used where the status quo provides that no supplementals are allowed.

Dean Berczi advised that a document concerning supplemental privileges in the Faculty of Commerce and Administration has been given to the Secretary of Senate and it was suggested that the document be presented to the Steering Committee for inclusion on the agenda for the next Senate meeting. Steering Committee should take into consideration whether or not this should be a priority item on the agenda. Steering Committee should also consider the possibility of a wider debate on the nature of supplemental examinations.

Concern was expressed over the last sentence in section 2 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) because it seems to imply that the individual faculty member can decide that a student may not write a supplemental, this being based on whatever particular evidence the faculty member may have concerning that student. It was suggested that the question of supplemental privileges should be based on the student's general record rather than on what the student has done in a particular course.

An amendment was suggested to delete the italics under section 2, and replace with the italics under section 1 (DOC-US-76-5-D1).

It was argued that for the purposes of supplemental Privileges, a distinction should be made between someone who gets a very low grade and someone who is salvageable. It is within human possibility that an excellent student does extremely badly in a particular course.

The opinion was expressed that the supplemental is a remedy that makes sense in some particular circumstances but not in all circumstances. If the course is organized in such a way that 50 percent of the final grade is made up of one final examination, and a student does poorly in that exam, it

makes sense to have a supplemental in a course with that kind of design. However, if the final grade is made up of ten 10 percent assignments, a supplemental makes very little sense.

Dr. O'Brien advised that Senate has almost reached the point where the grading system and supplemental policy have to be decided simultaneously. He suggested that there were two decisions that we can make at this moment. One alternative is to say that the supplemental policy is not yet determined and it would therefore be appropriate to have the same wording in section 1 of document US-76-5-Dl stated also in section 2 of the document concerning the "FF" grade. This leaves the question open for the future.

The other alternative is to say that whatever we may do with supplementals, in general, we are sufficiently convinced that "FF" is so bad that supplementals should not be attached to it.

Dr. O'Brien stated that with respect to the first alternative, it may be that Senate may eventually wish to make some other regulation about supplementals, in which case both of these things would have to be adapted to it. This is being proposed not as the ultimate solution to the question, but as a way in which the grading system can be adopted today and the supplemental policy can be adopted later.

Concern was expressed for the situation where, because of an extremely low grade and the particular make up of the course, a supplemental cannot result in a passing grade. It was suggested that the second paragraph should include the possibility of an "FFNS" entry.

IT WAS MOVED BY DEAN BERCZI, SECONDED BY PROF. BRUNET, THAT SECTIONS 1 AND 2 OF THE 'SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON GRADING SYSTEM - DOCUMENT US-76-5-Dl - (ITALICS) BE APPROVED.

AN AMENDMENT WAS MOVED BY DEAN CALLAGHAN, SECONDED BY PROF. OSMAN, THAT THE SENTENCE IN ITALICS IN SECTION 2 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) BE DELETED AND REPIACED BY THE PARAGRAPHS IN ITALICS IN SECTION 1, WITH "FNS" CHANGED TO "FFNS".

It was argued that as long as there are supplementals and the possibility of everything depending on a final examination, one should not exclude the possibility of a supplemental for someone failing miserably in that final examination.

It was pointed out that by approving the amendment we would be doing not much more than separating the decision on whether or not to allow a supplemental from the decision on what grade to assign a student.

It was suggested that philosophically there should be a basic distinction between students who do so poorly that they do not deserve a second

chance and those who might be marginal and therefore deserve a second chance, There is also the question of a student who, through no fault of his own, ends up with a very low grade on the examination. We already have a method for dealing with that kind of a situation. The student would possibly get an "FF" and if the student thinks that he has a very special case which can be demonstrated, he can simply make use of the existing system of re-evaluation.

It was argued that while we have a responsibility to inform the students of what our grading system means, it must be kept in mind that the grading system is not synonymous with the academic regulations. What we are looking at are bits and pieces of the academic regulations and not the grading system. We have already established that the F grade is worth 40 and the FF is worth 20 and the motion and amendment are simply telling the student what the consequences of either of these grades happen to be.

- THE AMENDMENT WAS CARRIED -

- THE MOTION AS AMENDED WAS VOTED ON AND WAS CARRIED -

Responding to a question as to who will decide that there is no supplemental in a particular course, Dr. O'Brien explained that, at the moment, the policy states "subject to the regulations of the Faculty", but it is becoming increasingly clear that there must be a debate in Senate on the appropriate regulations concerning supplementals.

It was suggested that there be a column on the record and the transcript that is clearly the grade column and another column beside it in which the non-grade notations such as "NS" would be recorded. It was stated that this would best be solved by having the definition of grades, the grading system and the administrative symbols appear at the bottom of the transcript.

It was stated that this should be handled in the definition of the symbols by defining the grades clearly as grades and in addition, a notation that these other symbols may be appended or used. It was recommended that the Registrar look into this idea when designing the forms and the ultimate presentation of these things once they have been decided upon.

76-5-5 Concerning item 3 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) on "DXW", Mr. Adams explained that this is the symbol that will be reported if the student did not attend the final examination in a course.

Concern was expressed for the situation whereby a final examination might count as little as 30 percent of the final grade and the instructor mould be forced to submit a grade of DNW with a weighting factor of zero.

It was argued that an instructor should not be absolutely bound to assign this grade in the event that he can assign another grade, just because a student has missed a final examination.

It was suggested that the wording be changed to read "in those courses In which a final examination is an essential or required element of evaluation and in which a supplemental is not permitted."

It was stated that "DNW" should not be interpreted as a grade and one concept attached to the basic idea of a "DNW" would be that, in certain circumstances a student whose status in the course is signified by "DNW" would be deemed to have failed the course with certain things attached relating to supplementals or a we weighting factor in calculating an average.

It was argued that "DNW" should be considered as a temporary notation and at some point should be changed to another grade such as NR, F, or FF. The zero weighting factor should be removed from it and we would then have a DNW which would have to be cleared up and replaced by another grade with the particular weighting factor of that grade.

It was suggested that the two paragraphs in section 3 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) should be inverted and the second paragraph be changed to read that absence from the examination will provide a mark of zero for that portion of the final grade which the final examination represents. This would be the end of the matter in the absence of extenuating circumstances. With respect to the first paragraph what we are really talking about are "special" examinations and we should include a notation to the effect that these must be written at the next date at which such examinations are available.

It was argued that if Senate adopts the principle of giving some students an extension of time in order to upgrade a failing grade to a passing grade, it should apply to all students regardless of the original grade.

It was suggested that the wording of section 3 (DOC-US-76-5-D1) should be changed to read "in those courses in which a final examination is a necessary part of the evaluation, absence in the examination without extenuating circumstances will be entered as DNW and assigned a weighting factor of zero. Extenuating circumstances will permit a second examination at the regular time for supplemental exams. In other cases where this does not apply, the instructor will assign a grade appropriate to the evaluation of the students work in the course."

It was pointed out that there is the problem of the instructor not knowing whether or not there are extenuating circumstances and it was suggested that the last sentence above be changed to read "In other cases, the instructor will assign a grade appropriate to the evaluation of the student's work in the course and also the notation "DNW."

With respect to DNW and INC notations, Mr. Adams pointed out that there is a problem with academic evaluation. He must produce for or the Deans, prior to the supplemental deadline, a list of students who have met the regulations. He will not be able to do so if these grades are considered to be in limbo.

It was suggested that this could be taken care of by including in the first paragraph, the statement that DNW will initially be assigned a weighting factor of zero and also that extenuating circumstances demonstrated to the Registrar's office will permit a second examination at the regular time for supplemental examinations.

Concern was expressed over what constitutes extenuating circumstances and who makes the decision. It was suggested that an individual must make the decision and it should be the Registrar.

It was also emphasized that it was the student's responsibility to know what the academic regulations are.

It was pointed out that in the Loyola Faculty of Arts and Science there are several departments in the natural science area where the emphasis is on a final examination. Also, a distinction should be made between the grade that is given and the administrative notation. The grade sheet should have a column for marks and a section for remarks.

The feeling was expressed that it should not be necessary to have the two administrative grades of DNW and INC. There is a difficulty in some courses with DNW where the final examination is not that important. It would be better to combine these two notations into INC. The instructor should always give a grade based on what is available which would be followed by INC if there was any item within the demanded work for the course which was not completed. The submitted grade would become definitive after the established deadline has been reached if further action has not been undertaken by the student.

Objection was voiced to the suggestion that only one administrative notation be used, it being argued that these are administrative grades and the Registrar' Office must know what specific action must be undertaken by the student,

Dr. O'Brien expressed the opinion that, apart from the operational needs of the Registrar for DNW and INC, we should combine as much as possible the ideas of DNW and INC and the procedures that are associated with them. If the Senate agrees with this principle we should have someone draft an appropriate text to make sure that this can be worked out.

Preference was expressed for having only one grade represented by an INC, it being argued that any upgrading of a mark must entail the student getting in touch with the professor.

Mr. Adams explained that in most instances the instructors leave as soon as the grades are submitted making it impossible for a student to contact the instructor. It is essential that the Registrar know what action is required by the student to upgrade a particular mark. He also emphasized that the new system using both alphabetical and numerical grades will add significantly to the computer storage charge and if a third administrative symbol is added, which may require six letters, there will be a substantial increase In costs.

It was explained that what was being proposed was that the professor must submit a grade based on the best available information and that when there are missing items the professor will signify this by also submitting the appropriate notation. In addition, we would need statements to the effect that the grade will be entered on the transcript with the INC; that at a certain date the INC will disappear; that the mark followed by INC can be altered when acceptable circumstances exist; what the student must do to avail himself of that privilege; when the examination is to be written or a date by which material must be submitted. Also, if a failing grade is being submitted and the instructor is signalling "incomplete", something more precise than "F" or "FF" must be used and indeed, we really need the 0 to 49 range.

Prof. Bordan explained that the principle involved was that the professor must submit a grade based on the best available information, and that the intent is that the instructor will evaluate the course (not parts of it) on the total evidence at hand at the point at which he is evaluating everyone else. This means that a student who happens to be running a "B" grade but in only 20% of the course, will not receive a "B" grade. The "B" will be properly weighted. There will also be the indicator that says there is a possibility by way of extenuating circumstances that the student can do better. If this has not been cleared by the supplemental deadline,, the grade initially submitted by the instructor will stand.

Prof. Bordan also explained that if we have the two grades of "DNW" and "INC". the instructor who has decided that he wants to Bee the material that would have appeared had the student written the final examination, which in the instructor's mind is essential regardless of the weighting, will use "DNW" as opposed to "INC".

IT WAS MOVED BY PROF. BRUNET, SECONDED BY MR. BUSHE, THAT THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED BY PROF. BORDAN BE APPROVED.

- MOTION CARRIED -

Dr. O'Brien noted that the motion in principle was carried by a substantial majority and it was agreed that Prof. Bordan, in consultation with Mr. Adams, formulate a detailed motion for presentation to the Senate at the next meeting.

76-5-6 Concerning the Advancement Regulations, section 8, page 3, document US-76-5-D1, Mr. Adams explained that when these regulations were being discussed by the Ad Hoe Committee on Undergraduate Academic Regulations, it was discovered that the approaches of the two founding institutions were somewhat similar. The difference was that Loyola used a percentage basis while Sir George Williams used a credit count. There is no real difference between the regulations being proposed by the Committee and the existing regulations on the two campuses.

With reference to 8 a), (page 3, document US-76-5-D1), it was argued that it would be much easier to understand if the regulation was worded in the negative. It was pointed out also that the limits to remain in good academic standing were set at no more than 30 failed credits for the 90 credit programme, and no more than 40 failed credits for the 120 credit programme.

It was argued that the privilege of withdrawing from a course should not apply when determining the academic status of a student. However, it was pointed out that the academic withdrawal date was another issue which has to be reviewed. As it is now, it is approximately five weeks before the end of term.

IT WAS MOVED BY PROF. BRUNET, SECONDED BY PROF. DAVIS, THAT THE ADVANCEMENT REGULATIONS (SECTION 8, PAGE 3, DOCUMENT US-76-5-D1) BE APPROVED.

Concern was expressed for the statement in item b) under Failed Students which says "Failed - may not re-register." It was questioned whether there should not be a time limit on this condition.

Mr. Adams advised that the practise was that a student who had such a notation on his record would have his application for re-admission considered if he had been out for three or four years.

It was suggested that the last sentence in item b) under "Academic Probation" be changed to read "Students failing to meet these requirements may not re-register without permission of the Dean."

It was also suggested that the notation in item b), under "Failed Students" be changed to "Failed. May not re-register during that academic year."

Dr. O'Brien explained that any one of the academic regulations can have its exceptions because provision is made for exceptions whether it be by Faculty Councils, Student Request Committees, etc. The question really becomes "How frequently do we want a certain circumstance to occur?" It is virtually impossible for Senate to write a regulation covering the one in one thousand situation.

It was wondered whether it would be appropriate to have a Statement in the Calendar after the Academic Regulations to the effect that students with questions concerning procedures should contact their faculty advisor, the Registrar, or Faculty Dean.

It was argued that the regulations should be stated negatively for purposes of clarity to the students.

It was agreed that the Registrar should look into the question of a statement in the Calendar, either before or after the Academic Regulations, advising students where to go for information on procedures.

- THE MOTION WAS VOTED ON AND WAS CARRIED -

76-5-7 IT WAS MOVED BY PROF. GROSS, SECONDED BY DEAN BERCZI, THAT THE HEADING BE CHANGED TO "FAILURE REGULATIONS" AND THE CONTENT BE WRITTEN IN THE NEGATIVE.

- MOTION CARRIED -

76-5-8 Concerning the Grading System - Transition Arrangements (DOC-US-76-5-D2), Prof. Bordan explained that this particular document summarizes what was in the minutes of the first Senate meeting when the grading system was approved per se.

In addition, it attempts to include how the "F" and the "FF" would be handled in the transition process.

Prof. Bordan explained that on the Loyola Campus, there is no problem with, the "FF" grade because there is a suggested set of numbers that, for transition purposes, generate the "FF" weighted grade. However, on the Sir George Williams Campus the "R" grade has a different meaning than the yet unresolved "FF" grade. One possible solution might be simply to say that for transition purposes all "R" grades are "FFNS. "

It was agreed that the second sentence in the last paragraph on page 1 (DOC-US-76-5-D2) be changed to "R will be translated to FFNS…"

Prof. Bordan emphasized that there was no intent to go back and re-translate every record. The transition mechanism will be used for determining graduation "with distinction," "honours," and "medals and prizes."

IT WAS MOVED BY PROF. BORDAN, SECONDED BY DEAN CAMPBELL, THAT SECTION II, "TRANSITION SCHEME" (DOC-US-76-5-D2), WITH THE CHANGE THAT "R" WILL BE TRANSLATED TO "FFNS", BE ADOPTED.

- THE MOTION WAS VOTED ON AND WAS CARRIED -

76-5-9 The meeting was adjourned.

John Noonan
Secretary of Senate